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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KAMPALA 000551

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SUBJECT: UGANDA/DRC: OPERATION RUDIA II UPDATE (JUNE 1, 2009)

Classified By: P/E Chief Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: This cable is a periodic update on the regional military operation against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) known as Operation Rudia II. This report is not meant to provide an overarching narrative or polished analysis of the operation, but rather offers spot information gleaned in Uganda only, from credible U.S. Mission sources here. We recognize the regional scope of the operation and the fact that our sources may be limited in their knowledge and perspective on Rudia II. End Summary.

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MILITARY SITUATION UPDATE
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¶2. (S NF) Ugandan military operations on the ground continue to make steady progress. The Ugandan Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) are actively pursuing LRA groups and has successfully laid ambushes, killing senior LRA commanders. Between May 18 and 29, the UPDF killed 41 LRA fighters, including Brigadier General Cesar Achellam and Lt. Col. Okello Okuti. Six non-combatants were rescued during this period.

¶3. (C) The U.N. Mission in Congo (MONUC) office in Kampala confirmed that the World Food Program (WFP) has planned air drops of food in LRA-affected areas of northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). WFP says that the oncoming rainy season will make it difficult for larger aircraft to deliver food into Dungu. As a result, WFP had conducted several "test drops" of food by helicopter in and around Dungu. Similar operations will be conducted in Doruma, Bangadi, Duru, and Faradje. WFP reportedly coordinated with MONUC and the Congolese Armed Forces. However, the drops were not coordinated with the UPDF, which had reported it had found LRA carrying donor food near Faradje. REFCOORD met with WFP on June 1 to get more details and urge WFP to coordinate with the Ugandan military. We will report out on the issue septel.

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POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT
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¶4. (C) The contract of U.N. Special Envoy for LRA-Affected Areas Joachim Chissano expires on June 30 and will not be renewed at his request. Nuno Tomas, Chissano's Kampala office director, said that LRA leader Joseph Kony shows no interest in signing the peace deal and that Chissano has many pressing commitments. Chissano would be available should Kony change his mind. Uganda's Minister of State for International Relations Henry Okello Oryem told us that the Ugandan Government accepts the move, but is concerned that northern Ugandans might perceive it as an indication that there is no chance for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Oryem said that the Government would reassure northerners and remind the LRA that Kony could call Ugandan President

Yoweri Museveni if he decides to sign the peace agreement. Oryem also said that the Ugandan Government is concerned that Government of Southern Sudan Vice President Riek Machar might exploit Chissano's departure to try to re-open the peace process.

15. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX an analyst XXXXXXXXXXXX briefed the diplomatic community XXXXXXXXXXXX.. She stated that it had been "pretty clear" that the Juba Peace talks had not been "going anywhere," and that Kony had not been and was not now interested in peace. She recommended that the military operations continue with a focus on killing the senior LRA leadership and increasing efforts to protect the Congolese civilian population. She advocated a multi-lateral discourse on planning and increased MONUC capability, along with increased U.S. Government support, including planning support, intelligence, and logistics. She explained that Congolese President Kabila's internal problems, including opposition to the operation from eastern DRC parliamentarians, had been a problem, but that the lack of human rights abuses by the UPDF coupled with continued LRA depredations resulted in a positive perception of the UPDF presence among Congolese civilians. This has dissipated parliamentary opposition, according to Spiegel. (Comment: Spiegel, like most other non-governmental observers, publicly expresses surprise at the number of Ugandan troops still in the DRC and that the Ugandan troop strength has not been publicly discussed. We note that the Ugandan Government has deliberately (and successfully) kept quiet its troop strength and regular engagements with the LRA in order to keep a Congolese face on the operation. End Comment.)

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